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1. Write an essay on the cruelty of Lady Macbeth as the character is portrayed by William Shakespeare in his play Macbeth.

Answer: Lady Macbeth is one of the most notorious and notorious female characters in William Shakespeare's "Macbeth." She is known for her cruel and ruthless behavior. She is portrayed as a cruel, manipulative and power-hungry person who is willing to do anything to satisfy her ambition. Her cruelty is evident in her ruthless treatment of her husband, Macbeth, and her role in the murder of King Duncan. In this essay, I will explore Lady Macbeth's cruelty and how it is portrayed by Shakespeare in the play.

Lady Macbeth is first introduced as a ruthless and ambitious woman who is determined to see her husband become king. She uses her manipulation skills to convince Macbeth to murder King Duncan and take the throne. She argues that Macbeth is too weak and indecisive to achieve his goals on his own, and that he needs her guidance and support to succeed. Her cruel and calculating nature is demonstrated in her ability to manipulate Macbeth and convince him to commit murder, despite his initial reservations. Lady Macbeth's cruelty is first revealed in her initial soliloquy in Act 1, Scene 5. Lady Macbeth's cruelty can be seen in her role in the murder of King Duncan. Despite her husband's initial reluctance to carry out the deed, Lady Macbeth manipulates him by questioning his manhood and urging him to act on their mutual ambition. She taunts him by saying "When you durst do it, then you were a man; / And, to be more than what you were, you would / Be so much more the man" (I.vii.49-51). This shows her willingness to use any means necessary, even emotional manipulation, to achieve her goals. She laments that her husband, Macbeth, is too full of the "milk of human kindness" to perform the ruthless deed required to fulfil the witches' prophecy. She calls upon supernatural forces to "unsex" her and fill her with "direst cruelty." This soliloquy highlights Lady Macbeth's desire for power and her willingness to do anything to achieve it, even if it means committing cruel and immoral acts.

One of the ways in which Lady Macbeth's cruelty is portrayed in the play is through her manipulation of Macbeth. When Macbeth is hesitant to carry out the murder of King Duncan, Lady Macbeth uses her cunning and persuasive powers to convince him to go through with it. She taunts Macbeth's masculinity, telling him that he is a coward for not following through with the plan. She also appeals to his ambition, telling him that he will never achieve greatness if he does not follow through with the murder. Her manipulation of Macbeth demonstrates her cruelty because she is willing to use emotional abuse and psychological tactics to get what she wants. Her cruelty towards Macbeth is evident in her manipulation and domination of her husband. She is the driving force behind the murder of King Duncan and continually goads Macbeth into taking action. Lady Macbeth is not satisfied with just being a passive accomplice in the crime; she takes an active role in planning and carrying out the murder. She is the one who puts the daggers near the sleeping king, making it easier for Macbeth to carry out the deed. She then accuses Macbeth of being "too full of the milk of human kindness" and orders him to return the daggers to the scene of the crime to cast suspicion on the guards. This act of cruelty towards Macbeth demonstrates Lady Macbeth's ruthless and calculating nature.

Another way in which Lady Macbeth's cruelty is portrayed in the play is through her disregard for the consequences of her actions. After the murder of King Duncan, Lady Macbeth is not bothered by the guilt and remorse that Macbeth feels. Instead, she dismisses his feelings and encourages him to keep moving forward with their plan. She is willing to ignore the consequences of their actions, including the guilt and guilt-induced madness that Macbeth experiences later in the play. Lady Macbeth's cruelty extends beyond her role in King Duncan's murder. Throughout the play, she shows a callous disregard for others, treating even her own husband with disdain. For example, when Macbeth begins to show signs of guilt and

remorse, she dismisses his feelings, telling him that "a little water clears us of this deed" (V.i.65). She is cruel in her disregard for Macbeth's emotional state and shows little compassion for the weight he is carrying. Her disregard for the consequences of her actions is a demonstration of her cruelty because she is willing to put her own ambitions ahead of the well-being of those around her. Lady Macbeth's cruelty extends beyond her husband. In Act 3, Scene 2, she shows no remorse or pity for the murders she has helped to carry out. She even mocks Macbeth's guilt and shame, calling him a "weak man." She tries to wash away the "damned spot" of blood from her hands, but the guilt of her actions is haunting her. In addition to her emotional cruelty, Lady Macbeth is also physically violent. During a sleepwalking scene, she is seen scrubbing her hands as if trying to clean away the guilt of her actions, revealing her subconscious distress. She also implies that she would have murdered her own child if it meant advancing her own interests, saying "I have given suck, and know / How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me" (V.i.55-56). This statement highlights her cruelty and her willingness to sacrifice even the most innocent of beings for her own gain. This guilt ultimately leads to her descent into madness and death.

Lady Macbeth's cruelty is also demonstrated through her treatment of others. In the play, she is often dismissive and condescending to those around her, including her husband and the servants. She belittles Macbeth in front of others, making him feel inferior and powerless. She also treats the servants with disdain, demonstrating her belief that they are inferior to her and that she is entitled to treat them however she wishes. Her treatment of others is a demonstration of her cruelty because she is willing to use her power and status to hurt and humiliate those around her. The cruelty of Lady Macbeth is also evident in her treatment of her guests at the banquet in Act 5, Scene 1. She is completely dismissive of their concerns and behaves in a manner that is both rude and insensitive. Her cruelty is further demonstrated when she sees the ghost of Banquo and faints, revealing the depth of her guilt and remorse.

Lady Macbeth's involvement in the murders of King Duncan and Banquo is further evidence of her cruelty. She is not satisfied with simply being the wife of the king and wants to maintain her power and influence. She encourages Macbeth to take actions that will protect their position, even if they are unethical and violent. Her involvement in these crimes demonstrates her willingness to do whatever it takes to maintain her power and influence, even if it means committing acts of cruelty. In addition to her involvement in the murders, Lady Macbeth's cruelty is also seen in her relentless drive to maintain her power and influence. She is consumed by her ambition and is willing to do whatever it takes to achieve her goals. This drive leads her to become increasingly ruthless and cruel, causing her to lose the support of those around her and leaving her vulnerable to her enemies.

As for Macbeth himself, his demise comes due to his ambition. Macbeth's ambition is first ignited by the witches' prophecy that he will become king. He is initially hesitant to act on this desire, but his ambition is fueled further by his wife Lady Macbeth, who manipulates him into killing King Duncan. Macbeth's thirst for power only grows as he continues to commit more and more atrocities in order to maintain his position as king. This is evidenced in his soliloquy after he murders Banquo, in which he says "I have no spur / To prick the sides of my intent, but only / Vaulting ambition, which overleaps itself / And falls on the other" (III.i.24-27). Macbeth's ambition has become so all-consuming that he is willing to sacrifice anything, including his own morality and relationships, in order to maintain his power.

Macbeth's ambition also leads to his paranoia and isolation. As he becomes more and more ruthless in his pursuit of power, he becomes isolated from his supporters and surrounded by enemies. This is reflected in his soliloquy in Act III, Scene 1, where he says "I have no friends, / My faith is gone, and I am nothing left / But vengeance, tyranny, and hate" (III.i.131-133).

Macbeth's ambition has caused him to lose touch with reality and has driven him to become a cruel and ruthless ruler.

Furthermore, Macbeth's ambition is ultimately his downfall as he becomes too consumed by his desire for power. His ambition blinds him to the reality of the situation, causing him to make impulsive decisions that ultimately lead to his defeat. This is demonstrated in the play's climax, where Macbeth ignores the warnings of the witches and charges into battle, resulting in his death.

The consequences of Lady Macbeth's cruelty are evident throughout the play. Her manipulation of Macbeth and disregard for the consequences of their actions lead to his descent into guilt and madness. Her ambition and cruelty have caused her to lose touch with reality and have left her consumed by guilt and fear. This demonstrates that ambition and cruelty, when left unchecked, can have devastating effects on individuals and those around them. Her treatment of others contributes to the feeling of unrest and paranoia that permeates the play, as everyone is afraid of what she might do next. In the end, Lady Macbeth's cruelty contributes to the downfall of Macbeth, as well as the instability and chaos that plagues the kingdom.

Through Lady Macbeth's character, Shakespeare explores the dark side of ambition and the devastating effects it can have on individuals and those around them. Her character serves as a warning against the dangers of unchecked ambition and the potential for cruelty that can come with it. As the play progresses, Lady Macbeth's ambition and cruelty have a profound impact on her mental and emotional state. She becomes consumed by guilt and is haunted by the memory of the crimes she and her husband have committed. Her sleep is disturbed by vivid nightmares, and she is tormented by an overwhelming sense of guilt. This guilt ultimately drives her to madness, and she takes her own life. Lady Macbeth's ambition and cruelty drive her to make decisions that ultimately lead to her downfall and demonstrate that there are consequences to actions driven by unchecked ambition. Through Lady Macbeth's character, Shakespeare explores the consequences of using cruelty to achieve one's goals. The play serves as a warning against unchecked ambition and the dangers of using cruelty and manipulation to advance one's own interests. Lady Macbeth's ambition and cruelty ultimately lead to her downfall, as she is consumed by guilt and driven to madness.

In conclusion, Lady Macbeth is one of the most prominent and powerful female characters in Shakespeare's "Macbeth." Her cruelty is portrayed through her ruthless treatment of her husband, her manipulation and domination of him, and her lack of remorse for the murders she has helped to carry out. Her actions demonstrate her willingness to manipulate and commit acts of cruelty to maintain her power and influence. Through her character, Shakespeare explores the dark side of ambition and the devastating effects it can have on individuals and those around them. Lady Macbeth serves as a cautionary tale, warning against the dangers of unchecked ambition and the potential for cruelty that can come with it. Lady Macbeth is a complex character whose cruelty ultimately leads to her descent into madness and death. Shakespeare's portrayal of Lady Macbeth's cruelty serves as a warning against the dangers of ambition and the pursuit of power at any cost.